1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

offered every day, in others once a week, while still others come to life only annually or once every few years, when the festival of the deity is being celebrated. Such a festival usually lasts several days and culminates in the sacrifice of fowl, sheep, goats, and buffaloes. Devotees walk barefoot across fire, gash themselves with swords, and so on, on the last day of the festival.

While the priests at the Sanskritic temples are usually[1] Brahmins, men belonging to one of the non-Brahmin castes are frequently priests at the temples dedicated to village-deities. Here again practice varies from region to region, village to village, and temple to temple. For instance, in Coorg, Brahmins from South Canara are commonly priests at temples dedicated to village-deities. In Mysore and the Tamil country, on the other hand, a member of a non-Brahmin caste is normally priest at the temple of a village-deity.

Throughout peninsular India, excluding Kēraḷa, Māri is a common village-deity. She presides over epidemic diseases such as plague, smallpox, and cholera, which usually occur in summer. The propitiation of Māri with offerings and festival takes place in summer, and also whenever plague or cholera or smallpox breaks out.

Village-deities in peninsular India are frequently females. This is specially true of the area east of the Western Ghats. Ellamma (literally 'boundary-mother') is a familiar deity in Telugu and Tamil villages. Kāḷi is another familiar goddess.

All village-deities are not, however, goddesses: there are also gods. Ayyanār, for instance, is a very popular god in Tamil villages and he keeps watch on the village when the villagers are asleep. Bīrēdēvaru is a popular god in Kannaḍa villages.

All over peninsular India, with the exception of the Malayāḷam-speaking areas, bull buffaloes are favourite animals for sacrifice to village-deities. In the Malayāḷam-speaking areas, however, the favourite animals for sacrifice are the pig, goat, sheep, and fowl. The south-western part of Coorg shares numerous cultural forms with Malabar, and there the bull buffalo is not sacrificed to village-deities. In the eastern and northern parts, however, buffaloes are sacrificed to village-deities, especially Māri. But

[1] I say 'usually' and not 'invariably' because sometimes there are non-Brahmin priests at the shrines of Sanskritic deities. For instance, in many temples dedicated to Śhiva in one or other of his numerous forms there are Lingāyat priests.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Sārtāvu of Makki is referred to as Makki Sārtāvu, and so on. Frequently, the name by which a deity is popularly known gives no clue as to his Sanskritic affiliations: the deity Pālūrappa is said to be 'really' Vishṇu, but he is ordinarily referred to by the former name. Kuṭṭatammé means the 'Mother of Kuṭṭa' (a village in south Coorg), and this is the name by which the deity is popularly known. The deity's 'real' name is Karīn Kāḷi (Black Kāḷi), who is identified with one of the manifestations or forms of Parvati, wife of Shiva.

But it is not always that the popular name hides the Sanskritic affiliations of a deity: Bhadrakāḷi, Chāmuṇḍi, Povvedi (Bhagavati), Mādēva (Mahādēva), &c., have obvious Sanskritic affiliations, though such affiliations may not be known to all or even most of the devotees.

Nowhere in India are the village-deities regarded as gentle. This applies to Coorg too. The deity Madērappa settles down in the village Madé, and immediately flowers wither, sown seeds fail to sprout, and babies die in cradles. Another village-deity says that she will reward those who propitiate her and shoot an arrow at those who refuse to. In return for propitiation the deities keep away from the village and *nāḍ* epidemics such as plague, cholera, and smallpox, and grant children, good crops, and longevity. They also offer protection from ghosts and minor spirits who possess and harm human beings. The oracle of the deity acts as exorcist at the festival of the deity.

Sanskritic Hinduism, which is also All-India Hinduism, makes out village gods to be manifestations of Shiva, and village goddesses to be manifestations of Shiva's wife, Pārvati. The implications of such a systematization will be considered later.

III

The domestic and temple architecture of Coorgs seems to have been modelled on that of Malabar. This is only natural as most of the artisan castes in Coorg Proper are immigrants from Malabar.

While Coorg houses are extremely substantial structures, temples dedicated to village-deities are usually small and unimpressive buildings. But the well-known temples dedicated to Brahminical or Sanskritic deities are substantial, as formerly rich devotees liked building solid and massive temples for their patron-deities.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

When the fortunes of a *nāḍ* were at a low ebb, the elders of that *nāḍ* went on a pilgrimage to the patron-deity of the *nāḍ* and prayed to him for the birth of a hero in their midst.

Legends grew up about a hero. Chegettira Appaṇṇa is supposed to have accomplished everything he did before he was sixteen days old. The hero had power to curse. After he died, he became a powerful spirit, a *bira*.

The boundary of a *nāḍ* obtains importance on some ritual occasions. A groom passing in state through a *nāḍ* to the bride's village is given the 'plantain honour' at the boundary of the *nāḍ*.

Richter describes a custom which brings out the ritual importance of the *nāḍ*-boundary:

> In cases of sore afflictions befalling a whole village or *nāḍ* such as small-pox, cholera, cattle-disease, the ryots [peasants] combine to appease the wrath of Māriamma [the goddess Māri who presides over these epidemics] by collecting contributions of pigs, rice, coconuts, bread and plantains, from the different houses and depositing them at the *mandu* [green]; whence they are carried in a procession with tom-toms. In one basket there is some rice, and the members of each house on coming out bring a little rice in the hand, waving it round the head, throw it into the basket, with the belief that the dreaded evil will depart with the rice. At last the offerings are put down on the *nāḍ*-boundary, the animals are killed, their blood is offered on a stone, the rice and basket are left, and the rest of the provisions consumed by those composing the procession. The people of adjoining villages and *nāḍs* repeat the ceremony, and thus the epidemic is supposed to be banished from the country. In still greater calamities, a flock of sheep is driven from *nāḍ* to *nāḍ* and, at last, expelled from the country.[1]

X

There is no social unit among Coorgs which is without a head. Every *okka* has a headman and the headman's wife is the head of the women in the *okka*. A temple has a headman with a number of officials under him. A village has a village-headman, and above the village is the *nāḍ*, and every *nāḍ* has at least one *nāḍ*-headman, and frequently more than one. The highest category of headmen are, however, the headmen of *stmé* or *désha*, of whom there are eight in all.

Coorgs have a keen sense of discipline, which is associated in

[1] *Manual of Coorg*, p. 170.

hold duties for 60 days to recover her normal health, and devote herself to her baby. During this period she daily bathes in hot water after having been well rubbed with castor oil before a charcoal fire. The robust health of a Coorg woman is no doubt due to the care taken by them during pregnancy and confinement.

Naming Ceremony

As soon as a Coorg boy is born, a little bow of a castor oil plant stick with an arrow made of a leaf stalk of the same plant is put into his little hands and a gun is fired in the courtyard. He is thus at taking his first breath introduced into the world as a future hunter and warrior. This ceremony is not generally now observed. On the twelfth day after birth, the child is laid into a cradle by the mother or grandmother who gives the name, which in many instances is well sounding and significant. Boys are known by Belliappah, Ponnappa, Mandanna and girls Puvakka, Muthakka, and Chinnamma. The Coorg women are very prolific and bear children to the extent of ten or twelve. In cases of necessity a wet-nurse is engaged, but infanticide is not practised.

Family

The Coorg family is of the patriarchal type. It is the domicile of all male relatives and their children belonging to one parental stock. Two or three generations, grandfather, grandmother, their sons, daughters, daughters-in-law and other children numbering from 20 to 60 or even more in some cases, all live and mess together. The labourers who were once their slaves belong to the family and depend on their mistress for food and orders. So long as there is peace and harmony, a Coorg family is a fine example of the patriarchal type. Every domestic affair of importance can be undertaken only with the consent of the senior member. He is expected to look after the principal needs of the family and its members individually and check irregularities of all kinds by sound discipline. The nature and extent of his control may be gathered from the fact that married sons and their wives choose their residence under the paternal roof to avoid the responsibility of a separate establishment. The senior female member is the queen of the household, and holds a corresponding position among the junior members and their wives and daughters. The peace and harmony of the family that once prevailed may be marred by discord, by the harsh treatment of an imperious mother-in-law, by the jealousy and heart-burnings of the married members of the material questions affecting the family income and individual claims. The senior member who is the Karnavan of the family has no easy position under such circumstances. The domestic life under normal circumstances is brightened by the affection of the children for their parents and relatives, and the little ones, of whom there is generally a good number, are in turn great pets of the family. The bearing of the young in the presence of the old is decorous, but the grown-up members are not

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

the increasing difficulty of rice cultivation in some parts of the country, the change might be hailed as a most welcome improvement in the Coorg climate, which for the sake of human health might be still less loaded with moisture. 132

On the whole the influence of the Coorg climate with its average temperature of 66° 6′ is salubrious. The nights are cool throughout the year and Europeans are able to take exercise in the open air at all hours. European children in particular enjoy excellent health and their fat rosy cheeks form a striking contrast to the thin pale faces of those in the low country.

The rarified, often cold and damp air of Mercara with the usually prevailing high winds, necessarily does not agree with asthmatic and bronchial affections, chronic disorders of the liver and dysenteric complaints, but Fraserpet, which is 1,000 feet lower than Mercara, affords a salutary change during the rainy season.

The native troops, especially new arrivals from the low country, suffer much from the cold and damp and are, during their first year of acclimatization, subject to fever and bowel complaints, but in time even they enjoy the bracing climate of Mercara. [701] [164]

The climate of the valleys, particularly during the hot months preceding the monsoon, when, as the natives say, the old and new waters are mixed, is far from being healthy. Fevers, agues and bowel complaints are then very frequent and protracted. For the rest of the year the natives of the country pronounce the climate to be excellent especially after the monsoon. Besides the dreaded Coorg fever, which appears in its worst form, especially to Europeans, in the vicinity of Atur in south-east Coorg and about Sampáji on the western boundary, small-pox has laid a fearful hold upon the natives though vaccination is much in vogue. Cholera but seldom makes its appearance; and yields readily to treat- 132 164 [751]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AWS Coorg AWS

ment. A peculiar ulcer-disease on the limbs has lately been rather prevalent about Virajpet, which is ascribed to impoverished blood, for want of nourishing animal diet.

The account which natives of Mysore or from the Western Coast give of the climate of Coorg is not favorable. They have experience on their side. Of the large number of people, whom Tippu sent from Mysore to replace the ancient inhabitants, or who during the various wars were carried off by the Coorg Rajahs from the neighbouring countries to cultivate their lands, but few survived the change. In our days the thousands of Mysore coolies who annually emigrate to work on the Government roads or on coffee estates stand the climate much better, care being bestowed upon them and a periodical return to their homes being rendered practicable.

4. Cultivation of the principal productions.

Native agriculture in Coorg, as elsewhere in India, is still carried on as it was centuries ago. A system of rural economy, formed at a remote period and transmitted for ages unchanged, is not likely to be disturbed by so conservative a people, as are the Coorgs.

Rice is the staple product of Coorg. The numerous valleys throughout the land have, from ancient times, yielded an unfailing supply every year for home consumption and for exportation to the Malabar Coast. The rice-valleys are most extensive in South-Coorg, in the neighbourhood of Virajpet and in Kiggatnád, where some fields are of considerable breadth and several miles in length; but owing to the surrounding low, deforested hills which yield little fertilizing detrition, the soil is of a quality inferior to those fields of the narrower valleys near the Ghats, where the ground is terraced at considerable pains, but every field large enough for the use of the plough. The lower and broader fields of a

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

exists amongst the ryots. The Kiggatnád rice-fields are extensive and fertile, the grass-lands parklike, the mountain streams numerous, and the forests and jungles rich in valuable timber and bamboos. The Marenád- and Brahmagiri-hills with their cascades of the Barapolle and Laksmanatírtha are picturesque and their shólas and dense forests give cover to a variety of game. Many of the undulating grass-hills (Báne), being almost bare of trees and free from stones, seem admirably suited for dry cultivation, besides there are large pieces of other waste land; but the population is rather scanty and hardly sufficient for the cultivation of their rice-fields, since the abolishment of slavery. There are both European and native coffee-plantations in the Marenád-hills; but the natives seem to derive the greater profit from them. This taluq is in great want of good roads. There is only the military highroad from Periapatna to Cannanore, which is joined at the Gonikopal bridge by a branch road leading to Ponnappet; a trace has been cut to the Taluq-Kacheri and on to Kúrchi to connect Coorg with Wynád, but the work has been stopped. From Marenád a steep ghat, called the Mépalé-ghat, leads into the Malabar country and is used by the Lumbánies and Koramárs, who once a year carry rice from and salt into Coorg. A footpath leads into Wynád over the Brahmagiris by way of Tiranelli.

The south-eastern corner of Kiggatnád is unhealthy and strangers can scarcely be induced to settle there, in spite of the nearness of Kuttadámma's famous sanctuary, which cannot render the place more salubrious; fever, spleen and dropsy are the local diseases.

The Taluq-Kacheri is in *Hudikéri*. The place is well selected, being central and in a healthy locality on the top of a beautiful grass hill, whence a fine view of the Brahmagiris and Marenád-hills is obtained. An English School has been lately established and is promising well.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

657 vince should make their own arrangements, a supposition
648 which has proved impracticable, as there is not enough re-
657 munerative work for a private practitioner. Besides the Mi-
648 litary Hospital there is a Civil Dispensary; but it does not
743 receive that ready support from the wealthier natives, which would render so needful and benevolent an institution a more comfortable asylum for the sick poor.

There seems to be a more charitable spirit in Vírájpet, where Ráyanna Shetti, a merchant, has undertaken to erect and maintain a similar institution and Government granted a native medical subordinate for its charge. At the Mercara Dispensary 4,787 patients were aided during 1869-70 at a cost of Rs. 4,484, towards which Government contributed Rs. 2,916, whilst the private subscriptions and donations amounted only to Rs. 897.

657 Vaccination is attended to by two native vaccinators each
751 at Rs. 15 pay per mensem, under the medical officer's con-
● 164 trol, but, though the Coorgs at least are very anxious to have their children vaccinated, the operations seem not to be very successful and small-pox remains still a much dreaded epidemic.

657 To accord to the natives of Coorg a readier access to
648 medical aid, it has been proposed to educate a few Coorg lads for the medical profession, to practise hereafter, either as subordinates in the Civil department, or independently as "Native Doctors," and there is every prospect that the scheme will be carried out.

132 About the climate of Coorg and its influence upon human health vide p. 85 ff.